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Brief Glimpse At The CIA Iceberg

Some agitated stirring in administrative waters by Rep. Wright Patman suddenly gave the public a brief glimpse of a submerged part of that old iceberg the Central Intelligence Agency.

The glimpse was so brief that it isn't clear what (if anything) Rep. Patman exposed. He was conducting a probe of tax exempt foundations to see how many of these often strange operations deserve their tax exempt status.

Then all of a sudden a murky operation known as the J. M. Kaplan Fund, Inc., of New York City turned out to be a strange barnacle on the CIA. It isn't clear exactly how, why or for what purpose the CIA has used the Kaplan Fund. Indeed, there is some question about how, why and for what purpose its founder, Mr. Kaplan, has used this supposedly non-profit operation.

Presumably, the CIA must have such covers to get money into the hands of conscious or unconscious agents of American policy. Presumably, too, it must be able to avoid public accountability for such operations.

But putting the super secret CIA together with a "foundation" that Internal Revenue Service agents say has been used for personal and family advantage by its founder is properly disturbing. We don't count it as being naive for Americans to be disturbed just by the thought that such an iceberg as the CIA exists — no matter how necessary it may be. And it certainly isn't naive to be disturbed at the thought that CIA operations may help provide questionable and somewhat discredited "foundations" a defense against charges that they have abused their tax-exempt status.

The implication is that shady operations or shady characters can get a little protection by snuggling up to the submerged part (which is to say the major part) of the CIA. Be it ever so necessary, this implication is better accepted in the fictional world of James Bond where an omniscient author can make sure that all will, indeed, come out as it should.

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